

Chronology of the Negro Mountain Story

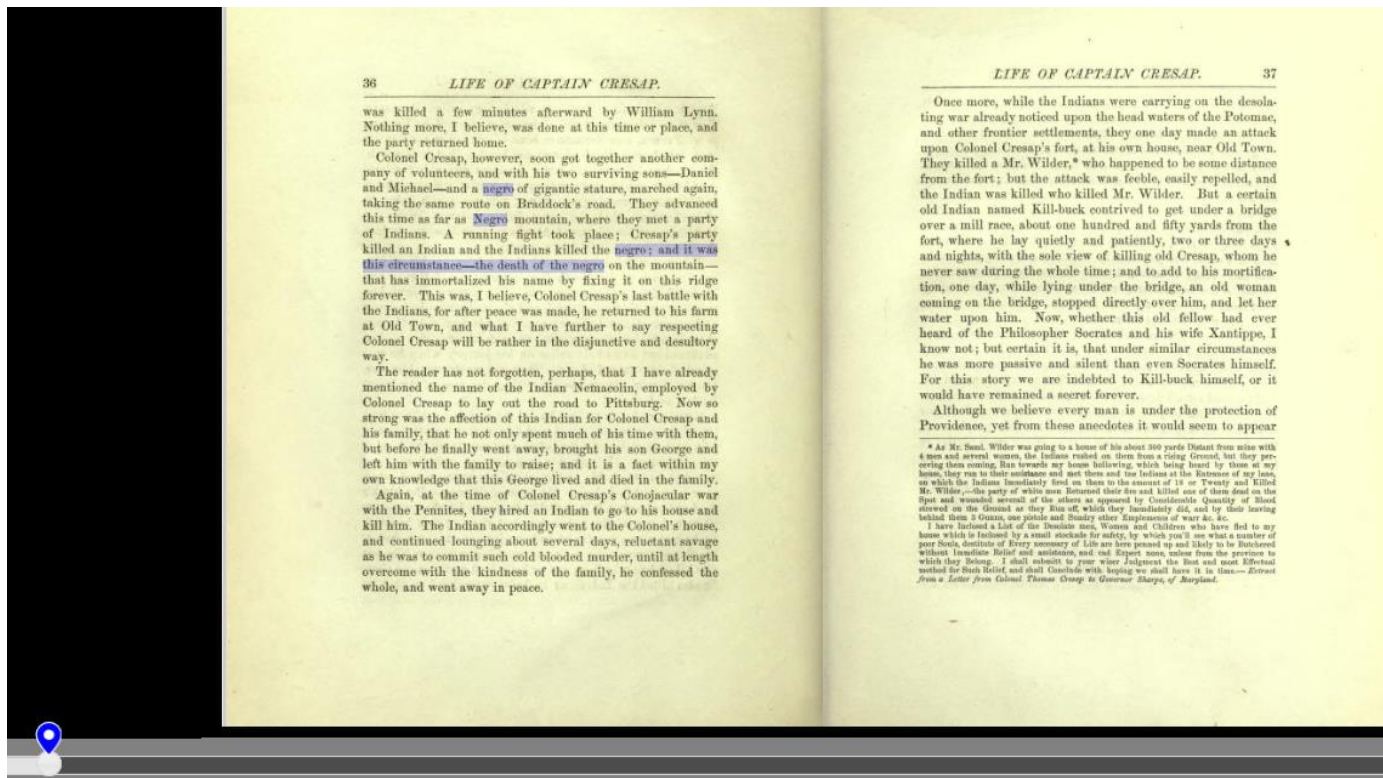
The genesis of the two better known Negro Mountain stories

June 17, 1756- Pennsylvania Gazette- “An old Negro presented his gun at the Indians”

June 10, 1756- Maryland Gazette- a “free Negro”

A third description of what seems to be the same expedition is located after this chronology. It does not mention the incident.

1866- John Jacobs- Biographical sketch of the life of the late Captain Michael Cresap- “a negro of gigantic stature”- no name (This detail seems to be based on the Andrew Friend/Goliath version.)



A biographical sketch of the life of the late Captain Michael Cresap

by Jacob, John J. (John Jeremiah), 1758?-1839; Boyer, Lieutenant

Publication date

1866

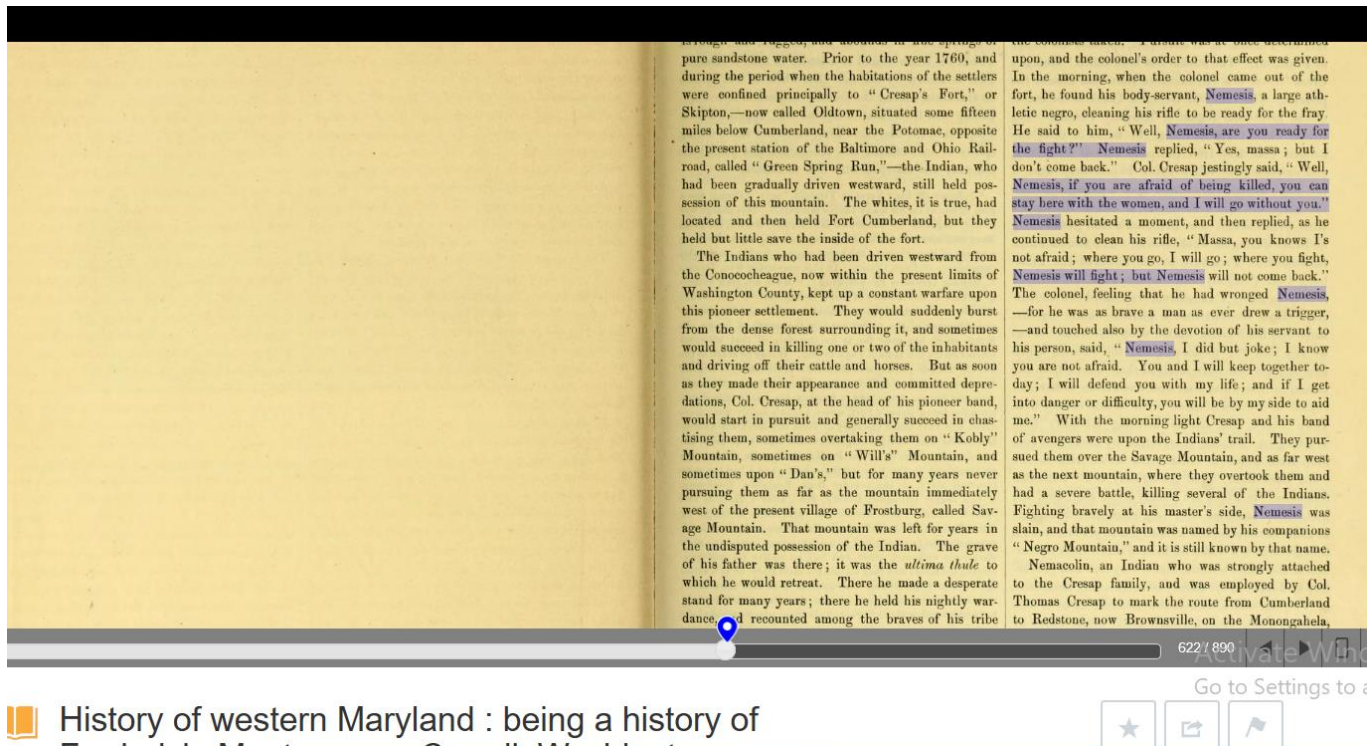
Topics

Cresap, Michael, 1742-1775; Jefferson, Thomas, 1743-

637 Views

1882- Scharf, **History of Western Maryland**, Volume 1- Quotes Jacobs' account in its entirety- "a negro of gigantic stature"

1882 Scharf, **History of Western Maryland**, Volume 2 -Additions to the story--**Nemesis name appears, & dialogue** is added.



Andrew Friend version- from **History of Bedford and Somerset Counties**, Chapter 4, Volume 2 by Somerset County, Pennsylvania Genealogy- 2008- <http://www.pagenweb.org/~somerset/hbs/index.htm>

With the party was a Negro, who most likely was a servant of Captain Friend, as he certainly had come from a slave-holding community. This negro, by all accounts, must have been a powerful man and of gigantic stature. Like all of the part, he was armed, and displayed great bravery in aiding to repel the attacks of the Indians. Exposing himself somewhat recklessly late in the evening, he received what was found to be a mortal wound. This was some distance up the mountain. His comrades would not carry him off with them, and this he himself saw, and, believing that he would die at any rate, he urged them to leave him where he was and continue their retreat. This Friend was unwilling to do, as he did not wish to abandon him in this manner. So he determined to remain with him. One other man, whose life Friend had on a former occasion saved, volunteered to remain also. During the last halt that had been made Friend and this man got the dying negro off the trail, and concealed themselves in the dense underbrush, while the remainder of the party, still pursued by the Indians continued their retreat.

The negro was in great pain, and just before daylight death came to him. In the bottom of the a hole left by the roots of a fallen tree a grave was hastily dug by the help of sticks, knives and hatchets, and he had a reverent burial, uncoffined save by the hull of a rotten chestnut log that had been used to shelter him from the rain that had

fallen during the night. The leaving him in his mountain grave, they continued their flight. The Indians were still on the mountain. In the early morning they could hear them imitating the call of the wild turkey-a lure often used to draw any one toward them who might be in the woods-but Friend was too war a hunter to be deceived in this way. With difficulty and after several narrow escapes Friend and his comrade succeeded in eluding the Indians and reached Fort Cumberland in safety. The names of the comrade and the colored man have not come down to our time, but it is greatly to the credit of these two white men, one of them of a slave-holding family, that they promptly recognized the manhood and bravery of their humble follower, and did not leave him to die alone, but rather than seek safety in immediate flight, chose to remain, at great risk to themselves, with this dying man of another, then as now, looked on by most of people, as an inferior race. But Friend and his companion had learned that the blood of all brave men is of one color. From the earliest period of the settlement of those parts of Somerset county this mountain has always been known and spoken of as the "Nigger" or Negro mountain, and it has well been written that it is a great and grand monument to those three brave and heroic men of our earlier days, that their story shall live while it endures.

Andrew Friend and his brother Augustine both became settlers in the Turkeyfoot region at a early day, and the names of both appear as land owners on the first assessment lists that we have. Augustine Friend, after remaining here some years, went further up the Youghiogheny river and settled in what is now Garrett county, Maryland , where many of his descendants, looked upon as the best of citizens, may yet be found. As to Andrew Friend, some of the traditions about him that are still extant have it that he was with Washington on his westward journey, and that he was also with the Braddock expedition, and served in the French war, although we have no means of verifying this. But if it be true, it may in a measure account for his having been, both before and after his settlement here, so frequently placed in command of local companies organized for defense against the Indians, and also of the fact of his well-known antipathy to the Indians, particularly to those of the Delaware and Shawnee tribes. Tradition has it that with his unerring rifle he sent more than one of them to the "happy hunting grounds," although it is said he never killed an Indian woman or child, or even a man, in mere wantonness, but only in a fight in self-defense or for the protection of his own or his neighbor's property.

2007 PA General Assembly

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE RESOLUTION

No. 378 Session of 2007

INTRODUCED BY YOUNGBLOOD, CRUZ, THOMAS, WATSON, HAHN, BOBACK,
HARPER, HENNESSEY, JAMES, KORTZ, MANDERINO, HENSCH, MYERS,
PHILLIPS, READSHAW, HELM, MURT, CREIGHTON, GRUCELA AND
QUIGLEY, AUGUST 1, 2007

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT, AUGUST 1, 2007

A RESOLUTION

1 Urging the Governor to form a commission or take other action to
2 study the naming of Negro Mountain and Mount Davis, adopt
3 names that accurately reflect the history of the region and
4 update related governmental agency brochures, plaques and
5 signs.
6 WHEREAS, Negro Mountain is approximately 30 miles long and is
7 located in the center of the Allegheny Plateau, spanning
8 Maryland and Pennsylvania; and
9 WHEREAS, for 150 years after the first colonies were
10 established, Negro Mountain was untouched by the settlers; and
11 WHEREAS, Treaties with the Indians in 1754 and 1758 forbade
12 occupancy west of the Allegheny Mountains; and
13 WHEREAS, The British and French developed political and
14 economic interest in the western territory during the mid-1700s;
15 and
16 WHEREAS, In 1756 during the French and Indian War, a skirmish
17 on Negro Mountain ensued between a band of volunteers led by the
18 English-born pioneer Thomas Cresap and the Indians; and

1 WHEREAS, Cresap wrote an account of the expedition for Ben
2 Franklin's "Pennsylvania Gazette" of June 17, 1756, and said "An
3 old Negro presented his gun at [the Indians]"; and
4 WHEREAS, The "Maryland Gazette" reported on June 10, 1756,
5 that a "free Negro" was killed with the English; and
6 WHEREAS, An historical account of the incident stated "While

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3 old Negro presented his gun at [the Indians]; and
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5 that a "free Negro" was killed with the English; and
6 WHEREAS, An historical report of the account stated: "While
7 crossing the Negro Mountain, a party of Indians fired upon them
8 and mortally wounded one of the Negroes, the strongest man in
9 the company. A piece of a hollow log was found and placed over
10 the Negro to shelter him. Throwing it off, he said, 'Save
11 yourselves and never mind me; I shall die soon!'; and
12 WHEREAS, It is said that the Negro Mountain took its name
13 from this circumstance; and
14 WHEREAS, In 1882 J. Thomas Scharf stated in "History of
15 Western Maryland" that the man's name was Nemesis and that he
16 was Cresap's servant; and
17 WHEREAS, The highest point of Negro Mountain, rising 3,213
18 feet, is in Pennsylvania and is the highest point in the State;
19 and
20 WHEREAS, The high point was officially recognized in 1921 and
21 named Mount Davis after John N. Davis, the settler who once
22 owned the land; therefore be it
23 RESOLVED, That the Governor form a commission or take other
24 action to study the naming of Negro Mountain and Mount Davis and
25 adopt names that accurately reflect the history of the region
26 and the heroism displayed by the African American in the Negro
27 Mountain conflict of 1756; and be it further
28 RESOLVED, That all related brochures, plaques and signs
29 accurately reflect the facts of this heroic historical event.

G17L0281L/2007040378R2373

- 2 -

Champ Zunbrun's version quoted on Whilbr.org- He seems to have merged all of the Cresap versions.

<http://whilbr.org/itemdetail.aspx?idEntry=3024&dtPointer=3>

The most commonly accepted historical account as to how Negro Mountain received its name can be traced to the 1750s. Colonel Thomas Cresap and his black body-servant, "Nemesis", were tracking a group of American Indians who some say had attacked a settlement near present-day Oldtown in Allegany County. It was said a family had been murdered and horses stolen. Others write Nemesis was requested to accompany a ranging party that regularly scouted the frontier in order to protect homes from attack. Either way, Nemesis had a premonition he would not return.

One evening while cleaning his weapon, Nemesis told Cresap that he would not be coming back. Cresap thought Nemesis was afraid, or going to runaway. He "jestingly" offered Nemesis the opportunity to remain behind with the women if he was afraid. Nemesis replied he was not scared, but simply stating a fact. Cresap's party pursued the Indians over present-day Savage and Meadow Mountains, to the next mountain where a fierce battle ensued. Nemesis fought bravely, was killed, and buried on the site.

Cresap named the mountain in honor of Nemesis' race and it has ever since been known as "Negro Mountain." Nemesis was said to have been a large and powerfully built man. "Negro Mountain" remains a memorial and historic tribute to the presence of this black frontiersman.

Based upon research undertaken by historian Francis Zumbrun, a letter sent to the Maryland Gazette in 1756 by Thomas Cresap explains the naming of the mountain. It states that it was a free black man who had accompanied his volunteer rangers during the French and Indian War and who had died heroically in the battle while saving Cresap's life. Zumbrun, a retired forester for the Maryland Department of Natural Resources and local historian, also notes that the mountain is named in honor of one of the earliest "free" black frontiersman on record in American colonial history.

Wikipedia today

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https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Negro_Mountain

Negro Mountain

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

Coordinates: 39°47′10″N 79°10′30″W﻿ / ﻿39.78611°N 79.17500°W﻿ / 39.78611; -79.17500

For the mountain in North Carolina formerly called Negro Mountain, see *Mount Jefferson (North Carolina)*.

Negro Mountain is a long ridge of the Allegheny Mountains, stretching 30-mile (48 km) from Deep Creek Lake in Maryland, north to the Casselman River in Pennsylvania, United States. The summit, Mount Davis, is the highest point (3,213 feet) in Pennsylvania.^[1] Negro Mountain is flanked by Laurel Hill to the west and Allegheny Mountain to the east.

Contents [hide]

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- History
- Controversy
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- External links

Geography and climate [edit]

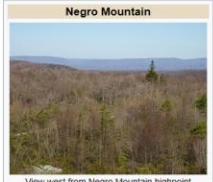
The mountain is flatish in appearance due to its location on the Allegheny Plateau, so its prominence is of low relief. The mountain retains its elevation above 3,000 feet (910 m) for much of its length, especially in Pennsylvania. The Negro Mountain Tunnel, built for the South Pennsylvania Railroad, is abandoned and was never used. The *Mount Davis Natural Area* on the Mountain is located within the *Forbes State Forest* and many trails take hikers throughout this alpine landscape.

Weather on the mountain is fierce, frost can occur at any time of the year and winds and ice storms are common. Near the summit in Pennsylvania, the trees are stunted and circular rock formations from frost heave can be readily seen.

History [edit]

Details behind the naming of Negro Mountain are not precisely known and a number of local stories have circulated in the past. Most of these are first noted in print in publications of the mid-19th to early 20th Century. The various stories seem to share, however, a couple of elements. One is that of a band of white soldiers or hunters skirmishing with Indians on the mountain during colonial times. The other is the presence with the whites of an African-American companion – variously named "Nemesis" [sic] or "Goliath" indicating his great strength or size – who accompanied the whites and died valiantly during the fight.

The best documented version of the story^[2] takes place during the French and Indian War, in the year 1756, when frontiersman Colonel Thomas Cresap is known to have led a force against French and Indian forces on the mountain. A member of his force, a black slave or a scout named "Nemesis," was killed in the battle. The mountain was accordingly named "Negro Mountain" in his honor.^[3] While many of these later histories contain embellishments that contemporary accounts cannot confirm, it is known that Cresap set forth on his incursion in May, 1756 accompanied by a band of frontiersmen and woodsmen he had gathered, plus elements of the 1st Virginia Regiment, 17th company "Rangers", under the command of Lt. Gist.^[4]




View west from Negro Mountain highpoint

Highest point

Elevation 3,213 ft (979 m)

Coordinates 39°47′10″N 79°10′30″W﻿ / ﻿39.78611°N 79.17500°W﻿ / 39.78611; -79.17500



Geography

Location of Negro Mountain in Pennsylvania

Location Somerset County, Pennsylvania / Garrett County, Maryland, U.S.

Parent range Allegheny Mountains

Topo map USGS Markleton, Meyersdale (PA) Quadrangle

USGS Markleton, Meyersdale (PA)

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https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Negro_Mountain

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Another version of the story has a Captain *Andrew Friend* on a hunting trip on the mountain with a few companions. The party was attacked by Indians and during the ensuing skirmish, an African-American servant of Friend was gravely wounded and died the following morning on the mountain. Again, the mountain where he died defending the life of his master was named in his honor.^[5]

Yet another version, this time from local family lore, tells of:

John Hyatt, one of the early settlers, [who] was a native of Maryland. He came with several others, accompanied by a number of slaves, to Turkey-Foot [Township] soon after the settlement began. While crossing the Negro mountain, a party of Indians fired upon them and mortally wounded one of the negroes, the strongest man in the company. A piece of a hollow log was found and placed over the negro to shelter him. Throwing it off, he said, "Save yourselves and never mind me, I shall die soon." It is said that Negro Mountain took its name from this circumstance.^[6]

The Cresap version is supported by the fact that Cresap is known to have written an account of such an expedition for Benjamin Franklin's *Pennsylvania Gazette* of June 17, 1756 mentioning that "an old Negro presented his gun at [the Indians]". The *Maryland Gazette* had already described the same expedition on June 10, 1756, mentioning that a "free Negro" had been killed with the English. It may be additionally noted that Andrew Friend and Thomas Cresap each drew pay, in 1766, from Captain Chapline's company of the Maryland Militia for frontier services.^[7] Additionally, John Hyatt is known to be the son-in-law of Andrew Friend, marrying his daughter Susannah.^[8] There is no record that he or Andrew Friend ever owned slaves, and as Pennsylvania residents, were unlikely to have been importing them. After the published accounts of Cresap's military action in 1756, the first recorded reference to the geographical landmark as Negro Mountain was in 1775.^[9]

Controversy [edit]

In July 2007, Pennsylvania State Representative *Rosita C. Youngblood* (Democrat of Philadelphia's 198th District) called for the renaming of Negro Mountain. In a news release, she said, "Through a school project, my son and granddaughter first informed me of the name of this range and I found it to be disparaging that we have one of our great works of nature named as such... I find it disheartening for tourists who visit this range to see the plaque with the name Negro Mountain displayed on the mountainside."^{[10][11]}

However, Professor Christopher Bracey, a law professor and associate professor of African and African-American studies at Washington University in St. Louis has said, "I must confess I have a slightly different take on it than [Youngblood]... Here we have a mountain, whose name was intended to be a testament to Negro bravery. It seems rather crass and unsophisticated to name it Negro Mountain, but the intentions were strong."^{[10][11]}

On 1 August 2007, Youngblood and other lawmakers introduced House Resolution No. 378^[12] resolving that the governor "form a commission ... to study the naming of Negro Mountain and Mount Davis ... [to] adopt names that accurately reflect the history of the region and the heroism displayed by the African American in the Negro Mountain conflict of 1756" and accordingly to alter "brochures, plaques and signs [to] accurately reflect the facts of this heroic historical event" (the 1921 naming of Mount Davis is now also considered controversial because it honors the white settler who once owned the land, rather than the colonial African-American)^[12]

In February 2011, nine Maryland State Senators introduced a bill to rename Negro Mountain and *Polish Mountain*.^{[3][13]} All four Western Maryland representatives testified against the proposed bill, which was voted down in committee.^[14]

References [edit]

- ↑ Cohen, Saul B. (2000). *The Columbia Gazetteer of North America, Entry: Negro Mountain*. New York: Columbia University Press. p. 1157. ISBN 0-231-11111-1.
- ↑ Blackburn, E. Howard, William H. Welley and William H. Koontz (1906) *The History of Bedford and Somerset Counties*. Volume 2, Chapter 4.
- ↑ Bracey, Christopher (8 August 2006). "Some Thoughts on Negro Mountain".
- ↑ Bracey, Christopher (13 July 2007). "PhilaDelphia Daily News Interview".
- ↑ Bracey, Christopher (8 August 2006). "Some Thoughts on Negro Mountain".

One argument against Friend is that he was not in the area at the time. Yet, he had two children in the area in that period (1756 and 1758).

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https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Negro_Mountain

References

- ¹ [^] Cohen, Saul B. (2000). *The Columbia Gazetteer of North America, Entry: Negro Mountain* (ed.). New York: Columbia University Press. p. 1157. ISBN 0-231-11990-9.
- ² [^] Scharf, J. Thomas (1882). *History of Western Maryland*.
- ³ [^] [^] [^] "143 Bill seeks to rename Negro, Polish mountains". *WTOP.com*. Retrieved 14 March 2011.
- ⁴ [^] "Founders Online: To George Washington from Adam Stephen, 29 May 1756". *founders.archives.gov*. Retrieved 2019-09-25.
- ⁵ [^] Blackburn, E. Howard, William H. Welfley and William H. Koontz (1906). *The History of Bedford and Somerset Counties* (ed.). Volume 2, Chapter 4.
- ⁶ [^] "History of Lower Turkey-Foot Township, Somerset County". *PAGenWeb, The USGenWeb Project*. Retrieved 2009-02-08.
- ⁷ [^] "Maryland State Archives - Guide to Government Records" (ed.). *guide.msa.maryland.gov*. Retrieved 2019-09-24.
- ⁸ [^] "Susannah Hyatt" (ed.). *gen_family_tree*. Retrieved 2019-09-24.
- ⁹ [^] Cresswell, Nicholas (1924). *The Journal of Nicholas Cresswell, 1774-1777* (ed.). New York. *Check date values in: |date= (help)*.
- ¹⁰ [^] [^] [^] Interview, 13 July 2007. *Philadelphia Daily News*.
- ¹¹ [^] [^] [^] Bracey, Christopher (8 August 2006). "Some Thoughts on Negro Mountain" (ed.). Archived from the original (ed.) on February 6, 2009. Retrieved 2009-02-08.
- ¹² [^] [^] [^] "House Resolution No. 378, Session of 2007" (ed.). The General Assembly of Pennsylvania. 1 August 2007. Retrieved 2009-02-08.
- ¹³ [^] Julie Bykowitz (February 21, 2011). "'Negro Mountain' called an honor, others see racism". *The Baltimore Sun*. p. 1.
- ¹⁴ [^] Bieniek, Matthew (14 April 2011). "Rocky Gap, alcohol licensing bills passed legislature this session" (ed.). *Cumberland Times-News*. Retrieved 27 April 2011.

Other sources

- Wynn, Anita (2006). "The Story of Nemiss and Negro Mountain: How Far Should You Go in Reading a Public Sign?". *Anthropology News*, Vol. 47 Issue 7, pp 18–19. (Published Online: 24 Dec 2008). *American Anthropological Association*, doi:10.1525/aa.2006.47.7.18 (ed.).
- Bykowitz, Julie, "Controversy over 'Negro Mountain' reveals urban-rural divide" *Baltimore Sunpaper* (ed.) (Published Online: 21 February 2011)

External links

- "Forbes State Forest" (ed.). Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources. Retrieved 2006-07-12. *Note: As of July 2006, this web page has not been updated to reflect the Pennsylvania State Forest Districts realignment.*
- Negro Mountain historical marker (ed.)

Wikimedia Commons has media related to Negro Mountain.

V-T-E Mountains of Maryland [show]

V-T-E Mountains of Pennsylvania [show]

Categories: African-American history in Appalachia | African-American history of Maryland | African-American-related controversies | African-Native American relations | Allegheny Mountains | History of racism in Maryland | Landforms of Garrett County, Maryland | Landforms of Somerset County, Pennsylvania | Laurel Highlands | Ridges of Maryland | Ridges of Pennsylvania

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John Hyatt was Andrew Friend's son in law.

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https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Washington/02-03-02-0182

TO GEORGE WASHINGTON FROM ADAM STEPHEN, 29 MAY 1756

From Adam Stephen

F. Cumberland [Md.] May 29th 1756

You have no doubt heard of the Party of Volunteers who went out under command of Colo. Cressop;¹ He returned about noon with about 60 of them & Six of the Nottawaies—About bare Camp,² his men mutinied, Some were for one thing and some for another—Lt Gist went from this place with him, with Eighteen men of the Regimt and Seven Indians—In Compliance with the mutinous tempers of the men rather than with any reasonable view they divided their men—Mr Cressop with the men under his Command Set off to fall in upon Y—Youghane above the G. Crossing, whilst Lt Gist marched with the Soldiers, Indian Capt. Tom,³ & Sixteen Volunteers Straight to it, and about a Quarter of a mile above the Spring on the Top of the mountains fell in with a party of the Enemy, The Skirmish lasted near an hour, The Enemy behaved with great Resolution and constantly aim'd at Surrounding our men, who on their part behav'd extremely well, prevented the Enemies designs and, According to our Aect, killed Six of them, with the loss of two of themselves—There are only two of the men who were in that engagment come in yet. They overtook Mr Cressop on his Return, with the murr abov(e) mentd, instead of marching for the River, which I am afraid will lead Mr Gist into a mistake—In their Return they fell in with three or four Indians,⁴ one of Whom they Scalp'd, & wounded two more mortally, but his Men were in such a pammick that he could not prevail on them to Stay and look for them.

The Enemy with whom Ltut. Gist fell in were on thier way down—I have not heard thier number—They may be the advanced guard of an Army for what I know: The Serjt who is come in, Says that they left the field, upon hearing a gun fird at a distance, and a great hollowing coming from the Crossing.⁵

I am anxious about Mr Gist and the men under his Command,⁶ I hope you will Send us up Some of the Recruits as soon as possible I am Sir, Your most Obedt hable Sert

Adam Stephen

ALS, DLC:GW.

1. Thomas Cressop (1694–1790) was a prominent Maryland frontiersman and land speculator. His fortified trading post was at Old Town, east of Fort Cumberland, but since the Indian raids began he had retreated to the comparative safety of the Conococheague settlement. For further identification of Cressop, see *Robert Dinwiddie to GW, 15 Mar. 1754, n.2*.

2. Bear Camp was 21 miles beyond Fort Cumberland on the road to Fort Duquesne, and only 8 miles before the Great Crossing of the Youghiogheny.

Washington Papers

TITLE

To George Washington from Adam Stephen, 29 May 1756

AUTHOR

Stephen, Adam

RECIPIENT

Washington, George

DATE

29 May 1756

Reference

CITE AS

"To George Washington from Adam Stephen, 29 May 1756." *Founders Online, National Archives*, accessed April 11, 2019, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Washington/02-03-02-0182>. [Original source: *The Papers of George Washington, Colonial Series, vol. 3, 16 April 1756–9 November 1756*, ed. W. W. Abbott. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1984, pp. 182–183.]

More between these correspondents

PRECEDING

This seems to be another contemporary account of the same expedition.